



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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## COUNCIL PREPARING DIACONATE REPORT

CHICAGO -- An Episcopal Church consultation on the diaconate -- in which representatives from 31 dioceses took part -- developed a report on that ministry which will be in the hands of diocesan officials by the end of June.

The meeting was called by the Council for the Development of Ministry in response to a request from General Convention to implement recommendations in a report, "The Church, The Diaconate and the Future." The Church hopes to develop a consensus on the nature of the diaconate as a separate ministry and to implement acceptable standards for training, evaluation and screening for the Order and based on the consensus.

The Rt. Rev. Elliott Sorge, field officer for Development of Ministry, said the 42 consultation participants agreed on a draft of a common understanding of the servant ministry. That will be edited and part of the final report.

From that understanding, they brought out models of a diaconal ministry and, from those, developed criteria for selection, deployment, training support and supervision.

Bishops and Diocesan Commissions on Ministry will be asked to work with the consultation findings, test and refine them for a year.

Bishop Sorge noted that a continuing thread through the consultation was the question of "why ordain?" for many of the models presented. He expressed the hope that bishops and commissions would be able to work out answers to this question that would be satisfactory to them and eventually help provide a wide agreement on the role of this ministry.

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